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SENSITIVE

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/PI, NEA/ARPI

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SUBJECT: OMAN ATTENDANCE, REACTIONS TO RABAT FORUM FOR THE FUTURE

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1B. MUSCAT 2035

¶11. (SBU) In a November 24 telcon, the MFA Under Secretary's Political Affairs Director, Humaid al-Maani, informed Pol/E Chief that, for the time being, neither Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs Yusuf bin Alawi nor Minister of National Economy (and de facto Finance Minister) Ahmed bin Abdulnabi Macki are likely to attend the Rabat FFF. MFA Under Secretary Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al-Busaidi and National

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Economy Secretary General (Minister Rank) Mohammed bin Nasser al-Khusaibi are instead slated to represent Oman in the ministerial sessions. Al-Maani indicated that he and a representative from the Ministry of Social Development (which handles NGO affairs) and the Ministry of Education were likely also to attend, as well as possibly another official from the Ministry of National Economy (to cover business and finance dialogues). Pol/E Chief emphasized that it would be unfortunate if neither Bin Alawi or Macki could attend in light of Secretaries Powell and Snow's planned attendance, to which al-Maani replied that his information was preliminary and possibly subject to change before December 10.

¶12. (SBU) Al-Maani appreciated contact information Pol/E Chief was able to provide concerning the civil society dialogue and business dialogue components of the preparatory sessions, but expressed disappointment that, to his knowledge, Omanis have not been involved in either effort thus far. (Note: An Omani businessman was invited to one of the initial business dialogue meetings but did not attend. End note.) He hoped that the Omani delegation during the Rabat FFF would be able to contact the relevant parties to ensure Oman was not excluded in future from those proceedings. In a final note, though the Moroccan Embassy has not yet formally provided the MFA with information on which states were invited to attend the Rabat FFF, al-Maani was encouraged by informal indications that states such as Syria, Iran, Pakistan and Libya were or will be invited. Such a measure was suggested by the Omani FM in a letter to Secretary Powell in October. Pol/E Chief emphasized that Morocco, as host, was responsible for issuing invitations, and that future participation in the Forum was designed to be flexible.

BALTIMORE